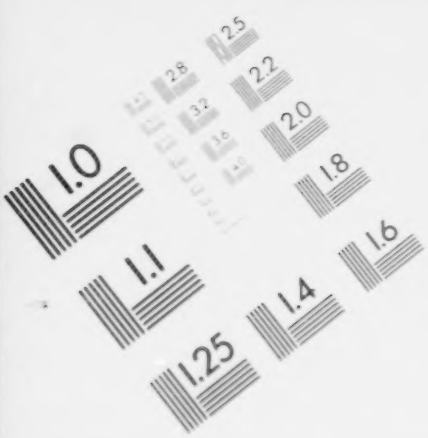

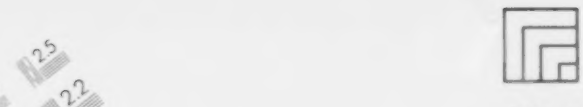

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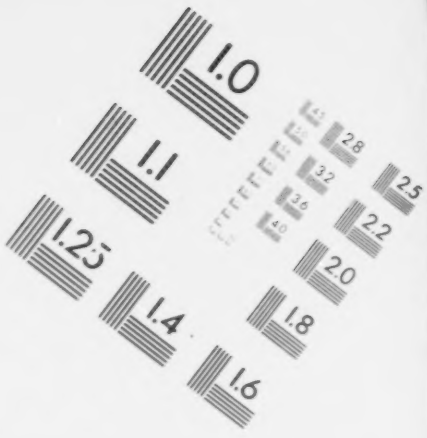

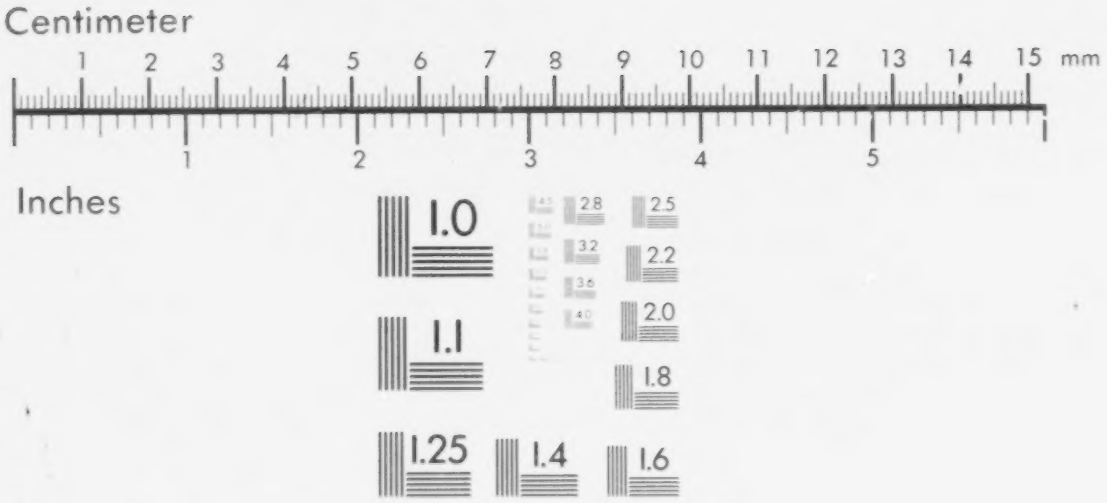

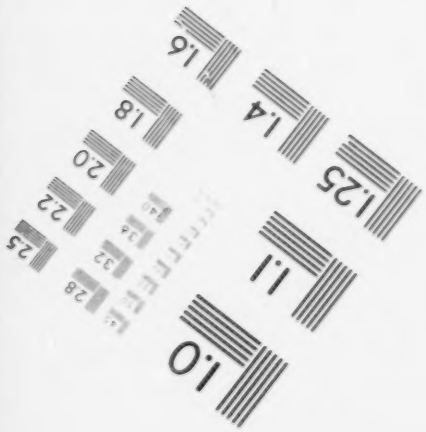

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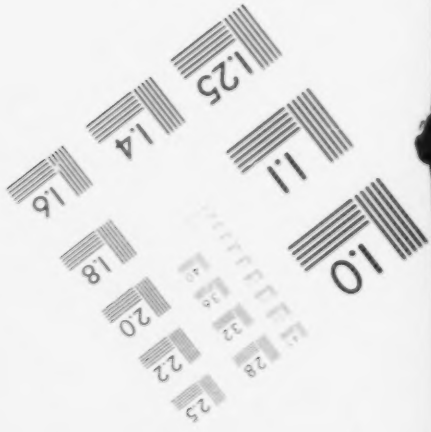

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ABSTRACT

In 1999, the Georgia Department of Education received a grant to implement character education programs in 25 schools. The intent of the four year grant was to identify schools with best practices to serve as models for the dissemination of successful programs in the state. The study included 6 high schools, 7 middle schools, and 12 elementary schools representing urban, rural, and suburban settings, and totaling 10,562 students. Results of the study showed that leadership was the key to implementing a character education program. Leadership was also very important for the culture/climate of the school, and was highly correlated with the other variables that make up a school's culture/climate. Elementary schools tended to have more positive student behavior related to character than middle and high schools. With regard to school setting, there did not seem to be much difference between rural and suburban schools. While too early to identify schools with best practices, it appears that the evaluation design will be able to accomplish this goal. (Contains 7 tables and 12 references.) (ADT)

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CHARACTER COMPARISON

A COMPARISON OF CHARACTER TRAITS FOR RURAL, SUBURBAN, AND URBAN STUDENTS

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A presentation at the Character Education Partnership Conference at Denver, CO on October 18, 2001.

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A COMPARISON OF CHARACTER TRAITS FOR RURAL, SUBURBAN, AND URBAN STUDENTS

Introduction

President Bush (2001) in writing about the importance of character stated that there is an unfolding promise that everyone **belongs** and deserves a **chance**. Tragically, on September 11th, 2001, the World Trade Tower and a section of the Pentagon were destroyed. More than 6,000 people were killed. They did not have a **chance** and no longer **belong** because of a few people whose character was very different from what President Bush was promising. Sadly, the actions of these terrorists were counter to a movement that has been growing for the past decade. The character education movement has been spurred by school violence or terrorists of another kind as in the Columbine High School incident. Closely allied with the school violence problem has been bullying behavior. According to Brendtro (2001) hundreds of thousands of students are teased and taunted each day. Beane (1999), in a book on the topic, stated that one in seven children is subjected to bullying behavior and that it affects about five million elementary and junior high students. Some school officials see character education curriculums as a way to reduce bullying behavior and prevent violence (Bulach, 2000). Schaeffer (2001) wrote "Almost everyone seems to be speaking of the importance of our schools helping to develop our children ethically and socially. . . . character education is simply a reaffirmation of the traditional role of schools to educate the whole person" (p.2).

While some see character education as the traditional role of schools, this view is not held by all. As a matter of fact, many believe that teaching character does not take place in the schools. Consequently, many states have mandated character education programs. New Jersey, for example, mandated their program in 2000 and published their (July, 2001) monogram titled "Character Education Program Resources: Profile Directory." Other states, Georgia for example during its 1997 legislative session, mandated a comprehensive character education program as follows:

> The State Board of Education shall develop by the start of the 1997-1998 school year a comprehensive character education program for levels K-12. This comprehensive character education program shall be known as the 'character curriculum' and shall focus on the students' development of the following character traits: courage, patriotism, citizenship, honesty, fairness, respect for others, kindness, cooperation, self-respect, self-control, courtesy, compassion, tolerance, diligence, generosity, punctuality, cleanliness, cheerfulness, school pride, respect for the environment, respect for the creator, patience, creativity, sportsmanship, loyalty, perseverance, and virtue. Local boards may implement such a program at any time and for any grade levels, and the state board shall encourage the implementation of such a plan. All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are

repealed (code section 20-2-145).

In August, 1997, the State Department of Education (DOE) adopted a "Values and Character Education Implementation Guide" to comply with the state mandate and ensure that all schools had a character education program. The following definitions are found in the guide:

- **character education:** the process by which positive personality traits are developed, encouraged, and reinforced through example, study (history and biography of the great and good) and practice (emulation of what has been observed and learned).
- **character concepts:** actions, attitudes, and practices that characterize a person. Acting honorably under all circumstances, even when it is to the disadvantage of the self.
- **character:** attributes or features that make up and distinguish the individual; the complex of mental and ethical traits making a person, group, or nation.

During the 1999 school year, the Georgia DOE applied for and received a four-year federal grant for $1,000,000.00 to implement a character education program in 25 schools. The intent of the four-year grant was to identify schools with "best practice" to serve as models for disseminating successful programs to other schools in the state. Six high schools, seven middle schools, and twelve elementary schools are involved in the study. The schools are further categorized as 10 rural schools in one district, 12 suburban schools in another district and three urban schools in another district. All elementary and middle schools feed into the high schools in the study. DOE officials wanted to know if there were any differences as a result of the type setting: rural, suburban, or urban or as a result of type of school: elementary, middle, or high school. They believed that this information would make the implementation process of "best practice" more effective.

In order to identify the schools with "best practice," the following data were collected:

- character scores representing student perceptions about the behavior of the other students in the school on 16 character traits;
- culture/climate scores representing teacher perceptions of the behavior of the faculty in the school and the administration on four culture variables and seven climate variables;
- implementation scores representing teacher perceptions of the behavior of the faculty and administration regarding how the character education curriculum was being implemented; and
- mean scores pre- and post for the above three sets of data to measure progress after one year of implementation.

Data were collected on these three broad categories of behaviors because it was believed that they

they would be related in some way. Determining the relationship between these variables could be useful in disseminating "best practice." For example, if the relationship between culture/climate scores and character scores is positive, some thought might be given to improve culture/climate before implementing a character education curriculum.

Definitions:

character: "An intrinsic attitude or belief that determines a person's behavior in relation to other people and in relation to self. A character value such as sportsmanship, generosity, courtesy, and empathy would have behavior associated with that character value which would be easily observable in relation to other people. A character value such as diligence, motivation, self-respect, and self-control would have behavior associated with that character value which would relate more to self and not be so easily observable" (Bulach, 1999, p.5).

culture/climate: those psychological attributes (culture) and institutional attributes (climate) that give an organization its personality (Bulach, Lunenburg, and McCallon, 1995) An analogy of an iceberg can be used to further explain climate and culture. Climate is the part of an iceberg that is easily seen above the water and culture is the part of the iceberg below the water. The climate variables can be seen whereas the culture variables cannot be seen and like the iceberg, climate cannot exist without the underlying culture (see instrumentation for the culture and climate variables).

Instrumentation

The instrument that measures culture/climate is called the "Instructional Improvement Survey." It consists of 96 behaviors that measure a school's culture and climate. The culture variables (psychological attributes) are as follows: group openness, group trust, group cooperation, and group atmosphere. The climate variables (institutional attributes) are also the effective school variables as follows: discipline, instructional leadership, classroom instruction, expectations, parent/community involvement, assessment/time on task. and sense of mission, . The instrument has an overall reliability of +.95 as measured by the Cronbach alpha. Reliability on each of the subscales varies from +.79 to +.85 (Bulach, 2000). **Teachers respond** to each of the 96 behaviors on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "completely disagree" to "completely agree." Completely disagree was scored as a "one" and completely agree was scored as a "five." An agree response was scored as a 4.0. Since most scales have eight behaviors, a score of 32 (4 x 8 = 32) is considered a strength and scores below 32 are considered areas needing improvement.

The instrument that measures character traits is called "A Survey of the Behavioral Characteristics of Students." It consists of 96 behaviors that are aligned with 16 sets of character

traits as follows: (1) respect for self, others and property, (2) honesty, (3) self-control/discipline, (4) responsibility/dependability/accountability, (5) cooperation, (6) integrity/fairness, (7) kindness, (8) perseverance/diligence/motivation, (9) compassion/empathy, (10) courtesy/politeness, (11) forgiveness, (12) patriotism/ citizenship, (13) tolerance of diversity, (14) humility, (15) generosity/charity, and (16) sportsmanship. The reliability coefficient of the instrument is +.96 using the Cronbach alpha (Bulach and Butler, in press). **Students respond** to each of the 96 behaviors on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "never" to "always." "Never was scored as a "one" and "always" was scored as a "five." For example, one of the behaviors is: "They think it is okay to do something as long as they don't get caught." The instructions tell students to choose the response which comes closest to **the behavior that describes what you think other students do or think.**

The instrument that measures how effectively the character education program is implemented is a modification of the "Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education" developed for the Character Education Partnership by Lickona, Schaps, and Lewis. It measures 45 behaviors that are thought to be relevant for the effective implementation of a character education program. A factor analysis of the 11 principles showed that the behaviors could be grouped into three factors as follows: (1) those that relate to curriculum; (2) those that relate to internal relationships; and (3) those that relate to community relations. The reliability coefficient of the instrument is +.86. **Teachers respond** the same as with the culture/climate survey and scoring is also the same.

Procedures

Each school system was allowed to implement their own character education program. There were also variations with the individual schools in a district. Two of the districts (the rural and suburban) had manuals for their schools with suggested activities. Each principal was allowed the latitude to tailor the character education program to their school. Some schools had a character word of the week and others every two weeks. Within the 25 schools, there was a lot of variance in how they implemented their character education program. Data were gathered from 1163 teachers regarding each school's culture/climate and the implementation process. Data were gathered from fifth grade students at the elementary schools, from all students at the middle schools and from 9th grade students at the high school in 2000 and 9th and 10th grade students in 2001. The total number of students was 10,562. Students responded to the survey regarding their perceptions of peer behaviors associated with the 16 character traits.

The first year of the grant was spent collecting pre-implementation data. Based on the data, school officials developed their implementation plan for the second year of the grant. Unfortunately, only 13 of the 25 schools were able to collect pre-implementation data. The data

for this manuscript(except for the pre- post-comparison data), however, were collected from all 25 schools toward the end of the second year and will be collected again at the end of the 3rd and 4th years. The 2nd year data were analyzed to answer the following questions.

- was there a difference in the character traits for the type of school;
- was there a difference in the character traits for the type of setting;
- was there a difference in the culture/climate as a result of the type of school;
- was there a difference in the culture/climate as a result of the type of setting;
- was there a difference in the implementation process as a result of the type of school;
- was there a difference in the implementation process as a result of the type of setting;
- what are the relationships between character, culture/climate, and the implementation process; and
- what changes occurred in the mean scores for the character, culture/climate. and implementation factors as a result of one year of implementation (only 13 of the 25 schools had pre- and post-data).

Results/discussion

Regarding the first question "was there a difference in the character traits for the type of school, the answer was a definite 'yes'." The mean scores of elementary schools for 15 of the character traits were higher than those of the middle and high schools (see Table 1). Further, there were scores of 3.0 or higher on 13 of the 16 character traits compared to three for the middle schools and one for the high schools. A score of 3.0 represents a response of "sometimes those behaviors were present." The character trait with the highest score for elementary, middle, and high schools was "patriotism" with a score of 3.49, 3.23, and 3.08 respectively. Saying the pledge of allegiance on a daily basis could be responsible for this finding. A score of 4.0 represents a student response that "those behaviors are present a lot." The character trait with the lowest score for elementary students was "humility" with a score of 2.95. The middle and high schools were lowest on sportsmanship with scores of 2.53 and 2.66 respectively. Scores approaching 2.0 indicate that students tend to disagree that students practice behaviors associated with that trait. Based on the data, it could be concluded that elementary students tend to practice behaviors associated with character traits more frequently than their counterparts in the upper grades.

Table 1

A comparison of character trait averages by school type (student data).

Character Trait	Elementary schools	Middle schools	High schools
Sportsmanship	2.99	2.53	2.66
Humility	2.95	2.92	2.86
Integrity	3.14	2.96	2.85
Perseverance	3.22	2.97	2.90
Cooperate	3.11	2.78	2.80
Compassion	3.08	3.09	2.98
Kindness	3.23	2.81	2.79
Forgiveness	3.03	2.98	2.96
Respect	3.37	2.89	2.68
Honesty	3.26	3.09	2.94
Self Control	3.22	2.89	2.81
Responsibility	3.24	2.97	2.73
Patriotism	3.49	3.23	3.08
Tolerance	3.32	2.81	2.79
Courtesy	3.11	2.76	2.77
Generosity	2.99	2.89	2.88

Elementary N =1000

Middle N =5919

High N=2520

Analysis of the data to see if there was a difference in the character traits for the type of setting revealed that the three urban schools had lower scores on all character traits except "sportsmanship" (see Table 2). The lowest score (2.59) for urban schools was on "respect." The urban schools had one score of 3.0 or higher; suburban schools had scores of 3.0 or higher on seven character traits; and rural schools had scores of 3.0 or higher on eight of the character traits. Suburban and rural schools had highest scores (3.27 and 3.17) on "patriotism." The lowest scores for both suburban (2.59) and rural (2.70) were on "sportsmanship." It could be concluded that urban schools have students whose character is worse than rural and suburban schools. However, this could be an error as only three urban schools were involved in this study, and they might not be representative of urban schools.

Table 2

A comparison of character trait averages by type setting (student data).

Character Trait	Urban schools	Suburban schools	Rural schools
Sportsmanship	2.85	2.59	2.70
Humility	2.78	2.93	2.94
Integrity	2.89	2.96	2.94
Perseverance	2.77	3.01	2.98
Cooperate	2.68	2.82	2.90
Compassion	2.81	3.10	3.11
Kindness	2.72	2.78	2.86
Forgiveness	2.89	3.10	3.09
Respect	2.53	2.89	2.94
Honesty	2.81	3.13	3.05
Self Control	2.69	2.94	2.92
Responsibility	2.77	2.95	2.98
Patriotism	3.04	3.27	3.17
Tolerance	2.66	2.89	2.87
Courtesy	2.72	2.79	2.88
Generosity	2.84	2.90	2.91

Urban N =1389

Suburban N =6216

Rural N=1846

A comparison of the culture/climate data for elementary, middle, and high schools indicated that elementary schools with an average score of 31.43 tended to have a better culture/climate than middle and high schools with average scores of 28.52 and 28.66 respectively (see Table 3). Elementary schools had more positive scores on all 11 variables. Further, elementary scores approached or exceeded 32.0 (areas of strength) on eight of the 11 variables. The middle and high schools, on the other hand, had no scores approaching 32.0. Based on the data, it could be concluded that elementary schools have a better culture/climate than middle and high schools.

Table 3

A comparison of climate/culture averages by school type (teacher data).

Instruction Related variables	Elementary schools	Middle schools	High school
Group trust	31.68	29.56	29.54
Group openness	25.03	23.66	23.74
Group cooperation	30.10	27.78	28.34
Group atmosphere	30.62	26.43	26.94
Sense of mission	32.01	29.38	29.44
Parent involvement	33.61	31.13	30.30
Teaching	32.27	29.00	29.46
Discipline	31.49	27.91	28.56
Assessment/Time on Task	33.12	29.93	30.17
Leadership	31.97	27.53	28.71
Expectation	33.67	30.65	30.22
Average	31.43	28.52	28.66

Elementary N =321

Middle N =343

High N=450

A comparison of the culture/climate data for urban, suburban, and rural schools indicated that rural schools with an average score of 30.00 tended to have a slightly better culture/climate than suburban schools with an average score of 29.8 (see Table 4). A score of 32.0 is an "agree" response that the 96 behaviors measured by the survey are practiced by the faculty and administration. Urban schools had an average score of 25.7 indicating that "sometimes those behaviors are practiced. Based on the closeness of the scores, it could be concluded that while there are some differences on individual variables for rural and suburban schools, the difference overall is very slight. Further the urban schools in this study were less positive on all dimensions of the culture/climate scale.

Table 4

A comparison of climate/culture averages by type setting (teacher data).

Instruction Related variables	Urban schools	Suburban schools	Rural schools
Group trust	26.30	30.60	30.20
Group openness	22.60	24.10	24.60
Group cooperation	25.00	29.40	28.20
Group atmosphere	23.00	27.80	29.10
Sense of mission	26.40	30.40	31.20
Parent involvement	27.30	32.60	31.80
Teaching	27.50	30.30	31.10
Discipline	24.10	29.80	29.80
Assessment/Time on Task	26.60	31.20	31.80
Leadership	25.40	29.70	29.90
Expectation	28.00	31.40	32.40
Average	25.70	29.80	30.00

Urban N =96

Suburban N =775

Rural N=243

Further analysis of the culture/climate data revealed that the three culture variables: group openness, group cooperation, and group atmosphere had lower scores than any of the other factors. Since climate depends on the underlying culture, it becomes more difficult to have good climate scores when the culture scores need improvement. The behaviors related to the "discipline" factor were the lowest of the climate factors with a score of 29.79. The faculty in suburban and rural schools agreed with scores approaching 32 that the behaviors associated with three climate factors were present. They were parent involvement, expectations, and time on task/assessment. The remaining climate factors: discipline, teaching, leadership, and sense of mission were all below 32.0.

An analysis of the data to see if there was there a difference in the implementation process as a result of the type of school or setting; showed that elementary, rural, and suburban schools have a better implementation process for their character education programs than middle, high, and urban schools (see Tables 5 & 6). Elementary schools with a score of 3.82 for all behaviors tended to agree that they implemented these behaviors. Rural and suburban schools with scores of 3.64 and 3.63 were fairly positive, but not as positive as elementary schools.

Table 5

A comparison of 11 principles averages by school type (teacher data).

11 principles	Elementary schools	Middle schools	High schools
Averages	3.82	3.44	3.43

Elementary N =321

Middle N =343

High N=450

Urban, high, and middle schools with scores in the 3.4 range tended to state that they implemented these behaviors "sometimes" (see Tables 5 & 6). For example, their median response was 3.0 on the behavior "Our school has involved representatives of the wider community in helping to plan our character education program." One of the major factors contributing to a better implementation process in the elementary schools is parent and community involvement. It is easier to get parents and the community involved at the elementary level, and this resulted in higher scores.

Table 6

A comparison of 11 principles averages by type setting (teacher data).

11 principles	Urban schools	Suburban schools	Rural schools
Averages	3.48	3.63	3.64

Urban N =96

Suburban N =775

Rural N=243

A comparison of the correlations between character, culture/climate, and the implementation process showed that there is a significant positive relationship between two of these three variables (see Table 7). The correlation between the average culture/climate score and the average implementation score of the 11 principles was +.750 ($p < .01$). The correlation between the average culture/climate score and the average character score was +.429 ($p < .05$). The correlation between the implementation score of the 11 principles and character traits score was +.266 ($p > .05$) indicating no significant relationship between these two variables.

It was disconcerting to find that the relationship between the implementation process and character traits was only +.27. Further analysis of the data, revealed that many of the elementary schools with high implementation scores also had higher scores on the character traits. However, high and middle schools tended to have low character scores even though they some had relatively high implementation scores. This would have caused the low correlation.

The correlation (+.429) between culture/climate and character traits indicates a weak significant relationship between culture/climate and character traits. However, one of the schools had an average culture/climate score of 34.4 (32 is an agree response) indicating that a number of faculty responded with "strongly agree' that many of the behaviors were present. This school and others also reported an improvement in behaviors associated with 13 of the 16 character traits. Consequently, while there were a number of schools who improved both their character and culture/climate scores, there were several schools that had a good culture/climate score and only improved a few of their character trait scores. Nevertheless, the relationship is there, and school officials, who want to implement character education programs are urged to pay attention to the culture/climate as well.

One other factor that can impact the implementation of a character education program is the leadership of the principal and the administration. The correlations in Table 7 show that there is a relationship of +.96 between leadership and culture/climate. This data supports the findings of Sergiovanni (2001) and Lunenburg (1995). Further, there is a relationship of +.75 between leadership and the implementation process. The relationship of leadership with character, however, with a correlation of +.38 is much weaker. It would appear that the role of the principal and the administration is a critical factor in implementing a character education program, but plays a much smaller role in improving character.

The correlation data in Table 7 shows strong positive relationships among all of the variables except for character traits and teaching. The correlation between teaching and character traits (+.29) is extremely weak. The strongest relationship with character traits are for group trust (+.42)group openness (+.51), parent involvement (+.46), assessment/time-on-task (+.52), and expectations (+50). Apparently, factors other than the way teachers teach and treat students in the classroom are important for behaviors associated with character traits to change. Certainly, the behaviors associated with group openness and trust can be observed by the students. Perhaps it is the behaviors teachers model with each other that are important for the development of character.

Table 7

A comparison of culture/climate variables with character traits and the 11 principles.

	Culture/ climate	Group trust	Group openness	Group cooperation	Group atmosphere	Sense of mission	Parent involvement	Teaching	Discipline	Assessment/ Time on task	Leadership	Expectation	11 Principles
Group trust	.854**												
Group openness	.621**	.676**											
Group cooperation	.873**	.628**	.391										
Group atmosphere	.937**	.811**	.521**	.860**									
Sense of mission	.642**	.632**	.37	.452*	.521**								
Parent involvement	.903**	.653**	.451*	.827**	.780**	.530**							
Teaching	0.32	0.247	.430*	0.194	0.349	0.077	0.28						
Discipline	.926**	.675**	.457*	.856**	.826**	.499*	.923**	0.225					
Assessment/Time on Task	.951**	.777**	.555**	.774**	.846**	.550**	.907**	0.312	.943**				
Leadership	.963**	.799**	.597**	.881**	.925**	.504*	.831**	0.344	.907**	.905**			
Expectation	.942**	.833**	.593**	.717**	.879**	.530**	.849**	0.369	.861**	.941**	.904**		
11 Principles	.750**	.550**	0.351	.667**	.710**	.397*	.714**	0.292	.734**	.762**	.751**	.747**	
Character Traits	.429*	.419*	.508*	0.167	0.202	0.344	.456*	0.294	0.372	.518**	.384	.504*	0.266

N = 25

** p<.01

* p<.05

The average scores for the year 2000 and 2001 were compared for each factor to see if changes occurred in the mean scores for the character, culture/climate, and implementation factors as a result of one year of implementation. Unfortunately, 12 of the 25 schools involved in this study did not collect data in 2000. Consequently, the comparison only involves 13 schools, and in those schools, scores improved for three of the 16 character factors. Two of the 13 schools (a middle school and an elementary school) made improvement in all 16 character traits. Four of the schools (all elementary) improved on two or less character traits.

The comparison to see if there was a difference in mean scores for the character traits in 2000 compared to scores in 2001 was disappointing. It was expected that the character education curriculum implemented in these schools would result in an improvement in many of the character traits. Instead there was an improvement in only three of the 16 traits. The good news, however, is that the instrumentation appears to discriminate between schools where the character education program is working and where it is not. Two of the schools showed improvement in all 16 traits and two of the schools improved on two traits and two schools improved on only one trait. Since one of the purposes of the grant is to identify schools with "best practice,' it appears that this purpose will be accomplished. However, there are two more years remaining with the grant, and, with only 13 schools and one year of history, it is too early to draw conclusions about "best practice."

The comparison of the culture/climate data revealed that improvement had been made in six of the 13 schools. In looking at the averages for each of the 11 factors, improvements were made in the following five factors: sense of mission, parent involvement, discipline, time on task/assessment, and expectations. The overall average for the 13 schools in 2000 was 29.45 compared to a slight improvement in 2001 with a score of 29.78

In comparing the culture/climate overall mean score, it was encouraging that six of the schools had an improved climate. However, the faculty agreed in only four of the 13 schools that there is a good climate. Further, while pre- and post-data were not available on the other 12 schools in the grant, culture/climate data for additional 13 schools were available for the year 2001. The faculty in four of those schools also reported a good culture/climate. Out of 25 schools, only eight have a good culture/climate. Clearly, more effort needs to be put forth to improve the culture/climate of the remaining 17 schools.

The comparison of the 11 principles data that is a measure of the implementation process revealed that improvement had been made in all three factors. The 11 principles were grouped into three factors as follows: those that relate to a curriculum; those that relate to internal relationships; and those that relate to community relations. The curriculum related behaviors improved from 3.52 in 2000 to 3.63 in 2001. The internal relations behaviors improved from 3.48 in 2000 to 3.78 in 2001. The community relations behaviors improved from 3.41 in 2000 to 3.64 in 2001. Six of the 25 schools had scores ranging between 3.9 and 4.26 indicating agreement that behaviors and procedures associated with the 11 principles were being practiced. It appears that the schools involved in this grant are putting forth a good effort to implement effective character education programs.

Limitations of this study

The unit of analysis for the correlation comparisons was the school. Consequently, the N (number) was only 25. Even though 1163 teachers responded in these 25 schools, the unit of analysis was still the school and the small N is a limitation. Another limitation for the pre- and post-comparison was the fact that only 13 schools had both sets of data. One other limitation is the possibility that any changes in character behaviors could have been the result of a better or worse group of students. For example, if the students in the fifth grade were a behavior problem in 2000 and good group in the year 2001, that could have resulted in improved scores on character behaviors irrespective of the character education program. One final limitation is the small number of urban schools. With only three urban schools, generalizing to other urban schools is impossible.

Conclusions

The leadership of the school is a key ingredient in implementing a character education program. Leadership is also very important for the culture/climate of the school and is highly correlated with the other variables that make up a school's culture/climate. Elementary schools tend to have more positive student behavior related to character traits than middle and high schools. With regard to school setting, there does not seem to be much difference between rural and suburban schools. Some schools have character education programs that are able to cause positive changes in student behavior associated with character traits. Other schools, even though they have a good implementation process, were unable to improve student behavior. While it is too early to identify schools with "best practice," it appears that the evaluation design will be able to accomplish this goal.

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